

Message Text

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17
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 5260

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TU, GR
SUBJ: AEGEAN TALKS

REF: STATE 279134, ANKARA 8696

1. I HAVE HAD OCCASION IN THE PAST DAY OR TWO TO TALK
BRIEFLY ABOUT NOV 2-11 AEGEAN TALKS WITH TURKISH AMB
BILGE AND GREEK AMB PROTONOTARIOS.

2. BOTH AMBS DESCRIBED THE NOV 11 AGREEMENT ROUGHLY
ALONG THE LINES OF PARA 3 OF ANKARA 8696. BILGE SAID
HE REGARDED TWO OF THE ARTICLES AS "BALANCING:" A) FOR ITS
PART TURKEY (THE AGREEMENT SAYS "BOTH PARITIES" BUT THE
CLAUSE IS AIMED AT TURKEY) WILL REFRAIN FROM ACTIONS IN THE
AEGEAN WHICH MIGHT BE PROVOCATORY, AROUSE PUBLIC OPINION
OR COMPLICATE EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION. THIS MEANS THE
SISMIK WILL STAY OUT OF THE AEGEAN FOR THE PRESENT. BILGE
MADE CLEAR THAT THE SHIP WOULD BE FREE TO CONTINUE
SEISMOGRAPHIC WORK ALONG THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, EAST
OF RHODES. B) FOR ITS PART GREECE IS COMMITTED TO
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REFRAIN FROM LOBBYING OR MANEUVERING AGAINST TURKEY IN

THE US. (THE LANGUAGE IS MORE ELEGANT, BUT BOTH BILGE AND PROTONOTARIOUS MADE CLEAR THIS WAS WHAT WAS MEANT.)

3. ACCORDING TO BILGE, GREECE EXPECTS TO REQUEST AN ADDITIONAL THREE MONTH DELAY IN PRESENTING ITS CASE TO THE WORLD COURT WHEN THE PRESENT SIX-MONTH-DELAY IS ABOUT TO EXPIRE. BILGE BELIEVES THE GREEKS WILL MAKE THIS REQUEST SOMETIME IN APRIL. THE TURKS WILL THEN EXPECT TO HAVE A NINE-MONTH PERIOD AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO PREPARE THEIR REPLY. THEREFORE, EFFECTIVELY, THE WORLD COURT CASE WILL BE PUSHED BACK EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

4. STRICT SECRECY WILL BE MAINTAINED IN THE TALKS AND DOCUMENTS PRESENTED IN THAT FORUM WILL BE CLOSELY GUARDED.

5. BOTH SIDES WILL AVOID INFLAMMATORY PUBLICITY.

6. BOTH SIDES RESERVE THEIR SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS.

7. THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL FORM A BILATERAL COMMISSION OR WORKING GROUP TO CONSIDER THE DELINEATION OF BOUNDARIES ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, NOT ONLY IN THE AEGEAN BUT ALSO IN THE MED EAST OF RHODES. BOTH AMBS ENVISAGE A MIXED GROUP WHICH WILL INCLUDE GEOGRAPHERS, GEOLOGICAL EXPERTS, LEGAL EXPERTS, FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS AND OTHERS. BILGE SAID THAT GREEK AGREEMENT TO MAP THE SEABED AND CONSIDER THESE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS REPRESENTS A SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN POSITION. NO DEFINITE DATE FOR COMMENCING THE WORK AND NO NOMINEES FOR THE BILATERAL COMMISSION HAVE BEEN DECIDED ON AS YET. BILGE ENVISAGES THE COMMISSION SYSTEMATICALLY STUDYING CASES AND PRECEDENTS IN THE WORLD WHERE ISLANDS LIE CLOSE TO THE TERRITORY OF ANOTHER STATE AND OFF THE MEDIAN LINE. IN THIS CONNECTION BILGE REMARKED THAT FRANCE'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE CHANNEL ISLANDS WAS DIFFERENT FROM FRANCE'S POSITION WITH RESPECT TO ITS OWN ISLANDS CLOSE TO CANADA.

8. BOTH AMBS EXPECT THE TEXT OF THE BILATERAL
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AGREEMENT TO BE MADE PUBLIC THURSDAY OR FRIDAY OF THIS WEEK WHEN CARAMANLIS RETURNS TO ATHENS.

9. BOTH AMBS INDICATED THAT THE TALKS HAD CONCENTRATED ON THE MODALITIES, AND NEITHER SIDE TRIED TO GET INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISPUTE. BILGE CLAIMED THAT THE GREEK SIDE HAD BEEN MORE FORTHCOMING BETWEEN NOV 2 AND 4 (WHEN THE RESULTS OF THE US ELECTIONS

BECAME KNOWN) THAN AFTERWARD. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GREEKS HAD NOT RENEGED ON THEIR EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO FIND A WAY TO PROCEED WITH EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE.

10. PROTONOTARIOUS MADE THE POINT THAT GREECE UNDERSTANDS NO FINAL SOLUTION TO THE QUESTION CAN BE REACHED PRIOR TO THE 1977 TURKISH ELECTIONS. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT GREECE, A COUNTRY OF NINE MILLION, HAD NO DESIRE TO PROVOKE HOSTILITIES WITH A COUNTRY OF ALMOST FORTY MILLION, AND MUST ALSO SEEK WAYS TO RELIEVE ITSELF OF ITS CURRENT BURDEN OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE.

11. BOTH AMBS EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF COOLING OFF THE CONTROVERSY. THEY RECOGNIZED THAT PROGRESS WOULD HAVE TO BE SLOW AND WOULD HAVE TO BE CONTEMPORANEOUS WITH A PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE.
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